

## **Tobacco Cessation at the Unit Level (FY05-5051)**

### **The health problem or issue**

This initiative addressed the tobacco use in the military community. The goal was to improve tobacco cessation rates in Active Duty Soldiers by determining which of three standardized tobacco cessation program was more effective for those Soldiers.

### **Outcome**

Here is where the outcomes go

### **Impact on force readiness and deployability**

Tobacco use by military personnel has a direct impact upon their ability to successfully accomplish their mission. Using tobacco produces decreases night vision, decreases the Soldier's ability to deal with stress, and produces impaired mental acuity. Other affects of tobacco use include reduced lung capacity, reduced fine motor coordination, slower wound healing, and greatly decreased stamina. Tobacco cessation provides the opportunity to achieve a healthier lifestyle, decrease the risks associated with tobacco use, and provide the Command with Soldiers that are stronger, healthier, and more able to perform their mission.

### **Demonstration of program effectiveness and/or impact**

Fifty to ninety percent of participants completed the programs tobacco-free. Some participants were referred by other program graduates. Many former tobacco users who completed the program volunteer to speak at future quit day sessions. One facilitator was a successful program graduate.

### **Unique and/or innovative program aspects**

- Three separate tobacco cessation programs were offered: a 4-week/5-session program, a 6-week/6 session program, and a 7-week/8-session program.
- All programs were delivered in an interactive group setting. Nicotine replacement therapy in the form of nicotine patches and bupropion were a part of all these programs.
- The sessions were offered monthly at lunch and in the evening. Participants enrolled for a specific program based on the amount of support they wanted and based on the amount of time they had available to attend the class.
- The programs were also offered at the unit level upon Command request.
- In addition, each unit was assigned a unit health promotion tech who taught requested health promotion classes. This personalized attention helped establish a good partnership with command and cadre.
- The use of a tech meant that health promotion class schedules could also be modified easily to meet unit needs.
- In addition, use of the health promotion tech enabled the unit commander to take ownership of the tobacco cessation programs and helped improved participant completion rates.

### **Critical success factors**

Critical factors for participant success across the three different tobacco cessation programs were group support and the use of nicotine replacement therapy and bupropion.

### **Challenges to effective project implementation**

Increased optempo impacts Soldier participation. Mission and training take priority regardless of the level of Command support.

### **Contribution to the HPPI portfolio**

The project provided valuable comparison information and data regarding different methods of delivering tobacco cessation interventions.